How to Curb Late-Night Snacking

After dinner snacking can cause you to consume extra calories and can negatively impact weight loss efforts. Late night snacking can often occur out of boredom, stress, or lack of sleep. Try these tips to curb late night eating.

**Eat Balanced Meals**
Grocery shopping and meal planning for the week can ensure you are eating healthy balanced meals. Eating a variety of foods and eating regular meals and snacks provides the body with a steady source of energy throughout the day. Regular eating also ensures nutrient needs are being met.

**Fill Up on Fiber and Protein**
Fiber and protein keep us full and keep blood sugar levels stable throughout the day. Women should eat 25 grams of fiber and men 38 grams of fiber each day. Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables to meet daily fiber needs. Whole grains, beans, fruits, nuts, and seeds are also rich in fiber. For protein, individuals should try to eat 20 to 25 grams at each meal. The recommended serving size is about 3 ounces, or the size of a deck of cards. This provides around 25 grams of protein.

**Get Enough Sleep**
Research has shown lack of sleep can negatively impact hunger, appetite, and body weight. The body sometimes confuses hunger with tiredness, especially at night. If you're tempted to snack in the evening after having a balanced dinner, it may be a sign your body needs rest. Adults should aim for 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Those who sleep less than 7 hours a night tend to weigh more than those who sleep more than 7 hours.

**Be Aware**
If you're tempted to snack after dinner, consider asking, “Am I tired? Am I bored? Am I sad?” If the answer is yes, find other activities that will meet your needs such as calling a friend, going for a walk, reading a book, or going to sleep. If you really are hungry, have a light snack. Eat something with protein and fiber such as nuts, yogurt with fruit, or veggies with hummus.

For more information on weight loss please contact the Minneapolis VA MOVE! Program at 612-629-7388.